

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8033
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YOK
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
EUCOM
USCINCEUR
CINCUSAFE
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST IZMIR
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 5012

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, TU
SUBJECT: IF ECEVIT FAILS, WHAT NEXT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IF PRIMIN ECEVIT'S GOVERNMENT FAILS TO WIN
THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON JULY 3, A POTENTIALLY LENGTHY POLITICAL
CRISIS WILL ENSUE. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FALL INTO TWO GENERAL
CATEGORIES: EITHER THE TURKS WILL MUDDLE THROUGH AND EVENTUALLY
FORM A GOVERNMENT UNDER THE PRESENT RULES, OR THEY WILL CHANGE
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THE RULES. AMONG SOME OF THE POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS WITHIN THE FIRST
CATEGORY ARE A RECONSTITUTED DEMIREL-LED CONSERVATIVE COALITION,
AN ECEVIT-ERBAKAN COALITION, OR A -GRAND COALITION" BETWEEN THE
REPBULICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) AND THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP). IT
IS EVEN POSSIBLE THAT NEW ELECTIONS WOULD EVENTUALLY BE HELD. A
CHANGE IN THE RULES COULD INVOLVE A REVISION OF THE ELECTION LAW
WHICH MIGHT COME ABOUT AS A DIRECTED SOLUTION, I.E., FROM SOME

FORM OF MILITARY INTERVENTION. END SUMMARY

2. IF PRIMIN BULENT ECEVIT'S RPP MINORITY GOVERNMENT FAILS TO WIN THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE NOW EXPECTED TO BE HELD ON JULY 3, A MAJOR POLITICAL CRISIS WILL CONFRONT TURKEY. AT THE BASIS OF THE CRISIS WOULD BE THE PROBLEM OF TURKEY'S GOVERNMENTAL WEAKNESS, UNRESOLVED BY THE EARLY ELECTIONS OF JUNE 5. THE BROAD CHOICE WOULD BE WHETHER TO LIVE WITH THE ELECTION RESULTS AND TRY TO PUT TOGETHER ANOTHER COALITION, INEFFECTUAL AS IT MAY BE, OR WHETHER TO TREAT THE PROBLEM AS SYSTEMIC AND MAKE THE REFORMS NECESSARY SO THAT THE ELECTION PROCESS WILL PRODUCE A STRONG GOVERNMENT. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT, FOR THE TIME BEING, EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO LIVE WITH THE ELECTION RESULTS. MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF FACTORS COULD WELL FEED AN ATMOSPHERE OF CRISIS: (A) TURKEY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS; (B) THE BITTERNESS AND FRUSTRATION OF ECEVIT'S SUPPORTERS, WHICH COULD LEAD TO AN INCREASED LEVEL OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL VIOLENCE; AND (C) THE USUAL DIFFICULTIES OF COALITION FORMATION.

3. THE TASK OF SEEKING A SOLUTION TO THE CRISIS WILL FALL TO PRESIDENT KORUTURK, WHO PROBABLY WOULD BEGIN BY ASKING ECEVIT TO REMAIN AS CARETAKER PRIMIN UNTIL A NEW GOVERNMENT IS FORMED AND ACCEPTED. FORMER PRIMIN Nihat Erim HAS TOLD THE CHARGE THAT KORUTURK'S STRONG PREFERENCE CONTINUES TO BE FOR A "GRAND COALITION" INVOLVING AT LEAST THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES. HOWEVER, KORUTURK PROBABLY WILL FEEL OBLIGED FIRST TO ASK JP CHAIRMAN DEMIREL TO TRY TO FORM A

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GOVERNMENT, WHICH PRESUMABLY WOULD BE BASED ON THE THREE PARTIES CURRENTLY OPPOSED TO ECEVIT -- THE JP, ERBAKAN'S NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP), AND TURKES' NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP). (THIS STEP COULD BE PRECEDED BY A SERIES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN KORUTURK AND POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS AND WOULD THEREFORE NOT NECESSARILY OCCUR IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.) NSP CHAIRMAN ERBAKAN HAS ALREADY SERVED NOTICE THAT HIS PARTY WILL BE THE KEY TO COALITION FORMATION, AND HE WILL EXACT LARGE CONCESSIONS IN RETURN FOR COOPERATION.

4. IF DEMIREL TRIES AND FAILS, KORUTURK WOULD PROBABLY ASK ECEVIT TO TRY AGAIN. ECEVIT MIGHT THEN TRY TO FORM A COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH ERBAKAN -- DEPENDING ON CONDITIONS THEN PREVAILING -- OR HE MIGHT AGAIN TRY TO WIN TRANSFERS AND OTHER SUPPORT FOR A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE NSP. (ALTHOUGH IT IS THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE FOR KORUTURK TO ASK ECEVIT TO DO THIS BEFORE GIVING DEMIREL THE CHANCE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT, FAIRNESS WOULD SEEM TO DICTATE THAT DEMIREL GET HIS CHANCE BEFORE ECEVIT GETS A SECOND ONE.)

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OR 2 ANKARA 5012

5. ALTERNATIVELY, KORUTURK COULD FIRST (AS HE DID IN 1973) ASK EITHE
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AN INDEPENDENT OR SOME OTHER PROMINENT POLITICAL FIGURE TO TRY TO
GORM A GOVERNMENT WHICH COULD WIN THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. BECAUSE
OF KORUTRUK'S GENERALLY RECOGNIZED ANTIPATHY TOWARD THE NSP AND
THE NAP, HE MIGHT SEEK AGREEMENT ON A FORMULA BY WHICH AN OUT-
SIDER WOULD FORM A GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES.
THE SUCCESS OF SUCH AN EFFORT, OF COURSE, WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON
THE MAJOR PARTY LEADERS' AGREEING TO ALLOW THEIR MEMBERS TO
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PARTICIPATE IN A GOVERNMENT WHICH THEY THEMSELVES WOULD NOT HEAD.

6. AT THIS POINT, ERIM AND OTHER POLITICIANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE

TALKED AGREE THAT IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO FORM A GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE OPTIONS DESCRIBED ABOVE. PERHAPS THE LEAST DIFFICULT TO WORK OUT WOULD BE AN ECEVIT-ERBAKAN COALITION. ALTHOUGH SUCH A GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE RELATIVELY STABLE, IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE HIGH INTERNAL OBSTACLES TO DECISION-MAKING, JUST AS IT DID IN 1974. THE VOLUNTARY FORMATION OF AN INDEPENDENT-LED GRAND COALITION SEEMS OUT OF THE QUESTION AT THIS TIME, ALTHOUGH IF SUCH A GOVERNMENT COULD BE FORMED IT WOULD PROBABLY BE THE MOST HOMOGENEOUS AND STABLE GOVERNMENT WHICH COULD BE PUT TOGETHER WITH THE PRESENT PARLIAMENTARY ARITHMETIC. A CONSERVATIVE COALITION BASED ON THE JP, NSP AND NAP IS ARITHMETICALLY POSSIBLE; HOWEVER, THE PRESENT ANTAGONISTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ERBANKAN AND DEMIREL ARGUES AGAINST THE IMMEDIATE REESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONALIST FRONT. A FINAL POSSIBILITY WOULD BE A RENEWAL OF ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH THE FACT THAT THIS ALTERNATIVE WAS JUST TRIED AND FAILED MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT THIS EXPEDIENT WILL BE TRIED AGAIN SOON.

7. THE GOVERNMENT FORMATION PROCESS THUS HAS NO END IN SIGHT AS YET. EVERY WEEK THAT PASSES WITHOUT THE EMERGENCE OF A STABLE GOVERNMENT PROBABLY WILL INCREASE THE PRESSURES FOR REFORMING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. THE MOST DIRECT WAY TO REFORM THE SYSTEM WOULD BE TO MODIFY THE PRESENT ELECTION LAW WHICH, BY PROVIDING BASICALLY PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, WAS DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE "TYRANNY OF THE MAJORITY" WHICH TURKEY SUFFERED FROM IN THE 1950'S. IT HAS EFFECTIVELY DONE SO. MANY TURKS NOW BELIEVE IT HAS BEEN TOO EFFECTIVE AND SHOULD BE CHANGED. THE PRESENT ELECTION LAW, HOWEVER, IS BASICALLY THE PRODUCT OF THE 1961 CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY WHICH WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY THE RPP AND THE MILITARY; AND BOTH OF THESE INSTITUTIONS ARE RESISTANT TO

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ANY CHANGE IN THE LAW. OTHER REFORMS COULD PROVIDE FOR RUN-OFF ELECTIONS TO ASSURE A MAJORITY AND EMPOWERING THE PRESIDENT TO CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS.

8. THE MOST OBVIOUS WAY OF CHANGING THE RULES IS MILITARY INTERVENTION. SUCH INTERVENTION COULD TAKE MANY FORMS, RANGING FROM SPOKEN WARNINGS TO PARTY LEADERS (PERHAPS SUGGESTING A GRAND COALITION, WHICH THE PRESIDENT WANTS) TO A DIRECT TAKEOVER OF THE GOVERNMENT. AS WE HAVE OFTEN REPORTED DURING THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT THE MILITARY IS NOW ACTIVELY CONSIDERING INTERVENTION. FURTHERMORE, THE MILITARY TOLERATED THE LONG GOVERNMENT CRISES OF 1973-75 WITHOUT INTERVENING. NEVERTHELESS, AS THE SELF-PROFESSED GUARDIAN OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC, THE MILITARY COULD COME TO A DECISION TO INTERVENE IF IT, AS AN INSTITUTION, BECAME CONVINCED THAT THE REPUBLIC WAS ENDANGERED BY A PROLONGED GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS.

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